

BEHIND THE BADGE

End of Watch



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Officer Delma Devon Adams End of Watch: February 3, 1980



The home in Randleman, N.C., where Sandra (Adams) Spargo lives, is a simple brick ranch with a manicured lawn, two-car garage, and lots of pictures of grandchildren. The thing that struck me most as I walked in the door was a cabinet full of Santa Claus statues that greets guests as they come into the foyer. Sandra began collecting the statues the Christmas after her husband of 16 years was taken from her and their two sons, Phillip and Marcus.

It didn't take long for Sandra to start telling me about Jimmy and I thought to myself, who's Jimmy? That's when Sandra told me that when D.D. was born his father was not at the hospital, so the decision to name him after his father was made solely by his mother. Upon being introduced to his new son, D.D.'s father said he never really liked his own name, so he was going to call his new son Jimmy and that was that. Sandra said that they always knew who was calling the house by who they asked for: if they asked for Jimmy, it was family; if they asked for D.D., it was the police department; and if they asked for Delma, there was no telling who it was. Jimmy's homecoming from the

hospital was to a farm in the Meadow Community in Johnston County, he was number six of eight children; six boys and two girls. Jimmy was always a devoted son and was especially devoted to his mother following his father's death when he was just a young child.

Jimmy met Sandra while in high school and the two soon became inseparable. At 17, Jimmy gave Sandra a very small diamond that cost him the profits from his entire corn crop that year. It wasn't long after

graduation that Jimmy and Sandra told everyone they were going to the state fair, but actually eloped to Dillon, S.C. The happy couple moved to Garner, and Jimmy made frequent trips back to the farm in Meadow to look after his mother and make sure that all was well back home.

In 1965, Jimmy went to work with the City of Raleigh as a meter reader. Jimmy's job with the City brought him into contact with police officers on a regular basis, and it wasn't long before several of them convinced Jimmy to give police work a try. Jimmy was hired by the Raleigh Police Department on September 7, 1967, and he and Sandra moved into an apartment on Bloodworth Street. Shortly after completing the Academy, Jimmy became a patrol officer and later joined the Motorcycle Unit. A warm smile came across Sandra's face as she told me how proud Jimmy was of that motorcycle. She told me that without a doubt, Jimmy's happiest time on the Department was the time he spent as a member of the Motorcycle Unit.

Jimmy served on the Motorcycle Unit until 1975, when he was reassigned as a beat officer on "C" Platoon, where he established a reputation as a quiet officer who always had a smile and was always willing to help anyone who might need it. Members of his squad were quoted as saying that they would often go to Jimmy with questions instead of asking the sergeant. It wasn't long before Jimmy was named as a field training officer. Retired RPD Captain D.C. Poteat was one of Jimmy's last recruits, and remembers his former training officer as "the rock of the squad" and "very mature for his age."

On February 3, 1980, Jimmy, riding alone, was assigned to 136C. During that time, that area included Walnut Terrace, Wilmington Street, and South Saunders Street. Captain Poteat said that there was an alert put out during roll call about a drunk driver in the area of South Wilmington Street, and a brief description of the vehicle was included. It wasn't long before Jimmy located the suspect vehicle and arrested Cassie Scott Johnson for drunk driving, placing her in the back left seat of his patrol car. Johnson asked for her purse, and Jimmy, ever the gentleman, got out of the car to retrieve the purse and to assist the people who had been in the vehicle with Johnson in finding a ride home. He handed Johnson her purse, and was soon killed by a single gunshot wound to the back of the head as he sat in the front seat of his patrol car. When Jimmy died, his sons were 14 and four years old.

Jimmy was the second Raleigh Police Department officer murdered in the line of duty, and Sandra told me that she saw a lot of things change as a result. She still describes his death as "a ripple in the largest pond you can imagine." Officers began wearing their ballistic vests on both day and night shift, and check-ins on vehicle stops became a routine occurrence.

Original text contributed by Lieutenant D.S. Gillespie and retired Detective D.C. Moore.